

**The interplay between animacy and gender in Russian morphosyntax:
Paucal constructions in direct object function**

This paper is a contribution to the study of low numerals in Russian which, unlike most previous research (Corbett 1993, Pereltsvaig 2010, Pesetsky 2013), confined to the analysis of the nominative, accusative inanimate and oblique contexts, focuses on animate direct objects: example (1) illustrates the case alternation under study: accusative-nominative vs. accusative-genitive on animate feminine object NPs.

- (1) Narisuj v akvarium *trëx rybok* / *tri rybki*.
draw in aquarium [three fishes]ACC-GEN.FEM / ACC-NOM.FEM
'Draw three fishes in the aquarium.'

First, we offer the data from the Russian National Corpus, and extract the relevant statistics about the case alternation in the last two centuries, revising previous descriptions of the phenomenon (Plotnikova 1980, Grannes 1986, Mikaelian 2013). We observe: (i) a direct correlation between certain semantic features on the NP objects and a higher number of occurrences of the accusative-nominative case; (ii) the "lower" the paucal numeral, the lower the likelihood of the corresponding NP to be marked with accusative-nominative case, and (iii) within Modern Russian (19-20th c.), the moment of the writing has no impact on the alternation.

Then, we propose an explanation for the synchronic facts, including: (i) the existence of paucal morphology, following in part Bailyn & Nevins's (2008) and Pereltsvaig's (2010) analysis of the genitive form as paucal number morphology; (ii) the corresponding historical process: dual number morphology was reanalyzed as paucal, a highly defective category, and then was progressively replaced by plural morphology; (iii) the way in which this replacement proceeded: the higher the element in the individuation hierarchy, the quicker was paucal morphology replaced by plural morphology. However, we show that, while some of the factors playing a role in this process (the feature "animal") are easy to explain with the help of a fine-grained animacy hierarchy, others, namely grammatical gender and quantification, as elements lowering the individuation level of a NP, must be accounted for in a different way.

References: Bailyn, J. & A. Nevins. 2008 Russian genitive plurals are impostors. In: Bachrach et al. *Inflectional Identity*. OUP, 237-270; Corbett, G. G. 1993 The head of Russian numeral expressions. In: Corbett et al. *Heads in grammatical theory*, CUP, 11-35; Grannes, A. 1986 Rodi mne tri syna: animacy in Russian numerals – norm and usage. *Festschrift für Wolfgang Gesemann* 3, 109-117; Mikaelian, I. 2013 Cardinal numeral constructions and the category of animacy in Russian. *Russian Linguistics* 37: 71-90; Pereltsvaig, A. 2010 As easy as two, three, four? In: *FASL* 18, 418-435; Pesetsky, D. 2013 *Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories*; Plotnikova V. A. 1980 Imja čislitel'noe. In: Švedova *Russkaja grammatika I*. Institut russkogo jazyka Akademii Nauk SSSR.